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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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TO: Common Council
FROM: Mayor Jacob A. Woodford
DATE: July 15, 2021
RE: Response to Resolution 9-R-21 Transportation Utility Study

Resolution 9-R-21 regarding commissioning a Transportation Utility Study was introduced by Alders Firkus and Doran at the July 7 meeting of the Appleton Common Council. The Chair of that meeting, Council President Reed, referred the item to the Mayor's Office for review. This memo responds to that referral and offers recommendations to the Council to accomplish the underlying objective of the Resolution.

While the Resolution's focus is on the allocation of resources for a study, one might argue that the intent of the document is actually to direct the administration to commission a Transportation Utility Study. As written and plainly read, the Resolution specifies a process for the identification of resources, however, it does not actually authorize or direct the commissioning of a study. Furthermore, as advised by the Legal Services Department, the development of the Executive Budget is a responsibility reserved for the Mayor and not subject to the direction of the Council. Essentially, this renders the current Resolution's direction as advisory in nature.

The Council might also consider the matter of timing with the approach specified in the Resolution. Should the Council decide to wait for the 2022 Budget and Service Plan to authorize a Transportation Utility Study and appropriate the funds, the study will not commence until fairly well into 2022.

As it turns out, there is an opportunity to fund this Study using excess reserve funds available for allocation per City policy. Recommendations for allocating the excess fund balance were submitted to the Finance Committee at their July 12 meeting. One possibility would be for those recommendations to be amended by the Council to include funding for a Transportation Utility Study. Otherwise, a budget appropriation will necessitate offsetting operational cuts elsewhere to accommodate.

Questions have been raised regarding the potential cost of conducting a Transportation Utility Study. Staff has reviewed similar projects in our area and believes \$50,000-75,000 would be an appropriate estimate for the cost of these professional services.

This Resolution remains a legislative matter for the Council to sort out, so the following recommendations are offered respectfully and without expectation:

1. Amend Item 21-0946 from Finance Committee regarding the excess reserve fund balance allocation, reducing the allocation for enhanced crosswalks by \$50,000, the allocation for Parks by \$25,000, and creating a new line under Pedestrian Safety, Infrastructure Maintenance, & Public Spaces for Transportation Utility Study in the amount of \$75,000.
2. Amend Resolution 9-R-21 as follows:

Therefore, be it resolved that the City of Appleton commission a study with a qualified firm to determine the feasibility of creating a transportation utility for the city of Appleton that would assess a fee primarily to be used to assist in funding street maintenance projects, but may also be used as a source of funds for other transportation services, not including operational expenses such as snow removal or street sweeping;

Taken together, these actions would enable the administration to address the intent of the Resolution.